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A MIDDLE FLORIDA CEDAR SWAMP

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Chamaecyparis thyoides, known as white cedar in the North and juniper in the South, has a fairly wide but very irregular distribution in the glaciated region and coastal plain, mainly from Massachusetts to Mississippi and within 150 miles of the coast.* It seems to skip most of Delaware and Maryland, all of Virginia except Dismal Swamp, and all of Georgia except for a locality near Juniper on the line between Talbot and Marion Counties, though there are unconfirmed rumors of its occurrence elsewhere in that vicinity and in Okefinokee Swamp. In Florida it ranges from Gadsden and Liberty Counties, just east of the Apalachicola River, westward, and is chiefly confined to the West Florida pine hills, a continuation of the Altamaha Grit region of Georgia.† (The post-office of Juniper, in Gadsden County, is probably named for it.)

In December, 1924, a man in Bainbridge, Georgia, was advertising in Jacksonville (Florida) papers that he had white cedar or juniper poles for sale; and as I felt pretty sure that there was no such tree growing in that corner of Georgia, I wrote and asked him if his stock did not come from Florida. He admitted that I had guessed correctly, and furnished information showing that the cutting of *Chamaecyparis* poles (for telephone wires, etc.) in Liberty and adjoining counties was quite a flourishing industry, which I had not heard of in those parts before.

In January, 1925, I gave a news item about this industry, and the circumstances through which I had learned of it, to the daily papers of Florida; and soon afterward I received a letter

* See *Torreya* 7: 198-200, Oct., 1907; *Pop. Sci. Monthly* 85: 347-348, 1914; Taylor, *Mem. N. Y. Bot. Gard.* 6: 79-88, pl. 6-10. 1916.

† See *Ann. Rep. Fla. Geol. Surv.* 3: 218-219, 315, 352. 1911; 6: 208, 234, 238, 253, 423, 334, 342, 400. 1914.

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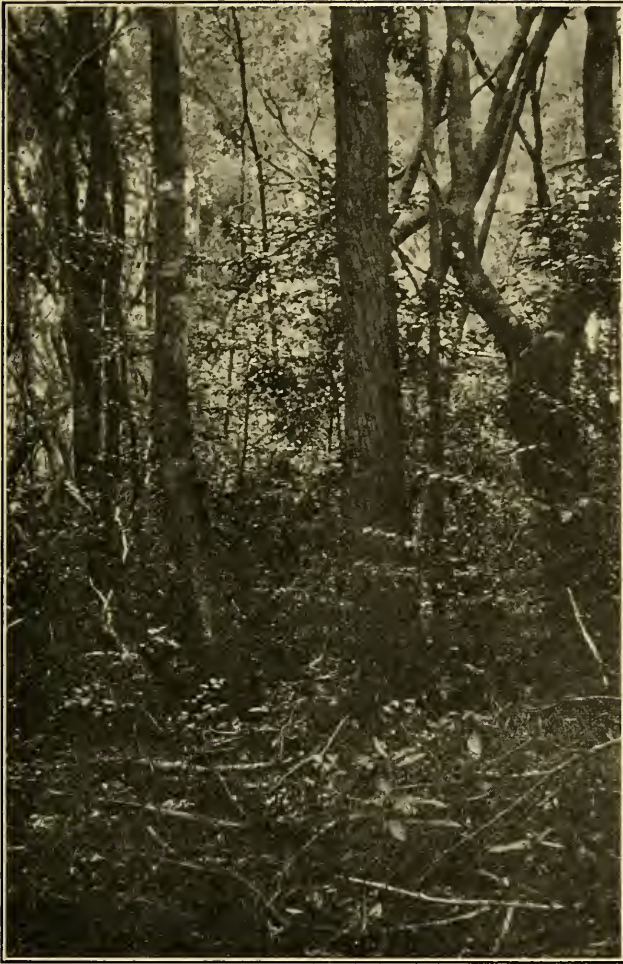
from a man in Jacksonville, stating that he owned a large body of juniper in Liberty County, six miles south of Bristol. Further correspondence elicited a little more information about it, but I did not have an opportunity to visit the place until the 7th of July.

On that date I arrived in Bristol shortly before noon, and planned to spend the afternoon walking out to the cedar swamp and back. I found it accessible enough, with a good road leading past it, but it was eight miles from town instead of six, so that my time for exploring it was very limited. Very likely I did not see the best part of it (and the owner assures me that such is the case), but as it is now for sale, and may soon be subject to destructive exploitation, it seems desirable to put on record at least an imperfect description of the place.

The swamp, known locally as "Johnson's Juniper," borders a small creek just about on the line between the pine hills and the flatwoods, on the road from Bristol to Estiffanulga. The surrounding soil is pretty sandy, and decidedly non-calcareous, but has clay subsoil within a few feet of the surface. Long-leaf pine is the commonest tree on the neighboring uplands. At the point where I entered the swamp, through a thick fringe of bushes (much of which had been recently burned, to the annoyance of the would-be explorer), *Chamaecyparis* is not the largest or most abundant tree, and it is scarcely visible from outside the swamp, at least in summer. (There is also a little of it in some smaller swamps near by, though.) Inside the swamp the ground was covered with peat, and fallen logs in all stages of decay, and it was fairly dry at the time of my visit, though probably wet enough in rainier seasons. The trees make a very dense shade, and there is almost no herbaceous undergrowth.

The accompanying illustration is from a photograph made with a 15-minute exposure; but the afternoon was cloudy and late, and in the middle of a bright day possibly one minute would have sufficed.

The composition of the vegetation of the swamp, as nearly as could be determined from my brief visit, is indicated by the following list, in which the plants are divided first into trees, shrubs, etc., and then arranged in approximate order of abundance. Evergreens are indicated by heavy type.



Interior of "Johnson's Juniper," near north end. July 7, 1925. The largest tree near the center is *Chamaecyparis*.

TREES

- Magnolia glauca* (bay)
- Cliftonia monophylla* (tyty)
- Chamaecyparis thyoides* (juniper)
- Pinus Taeda* (short-leaf pine)

Pinus Elliottii (slash pine)
Taxodium imbricarium (cypress)
Nyssa biflora (black gum)
Persea pubescens (red bay)

SHRUBS

Ilex coriacea
Pinckneya pubens (maiden's blushes)
Clethra alnifolia
Itea Virginica
Pieris nitida (hurrah bush)

VINES

Smilax laurifolia (bamboo vine)
Pieris phillyreifolia*

HERBS

Mitchella repens (turkey-berry)

BRYOPHYTES

Sphagnum cymbifolium?
Bazzania trilobata

Very few of the trees that I saw were over a foot in diameter, but there may be larger ones in other parts of the swamp. Evergreens predominate, as in many other sour swamps. *Ilex coriacea* is more abundant than all the other shrubs combined. Except for the presence of *Chamaecyparis*, this swamp is much like the non-alluvial swamps of South Georgia,† Bear Swamp in Autauga County, Alabama,‡ the bays of West Florida,§ and many other coastal plain swamps with soft water which does not vary much in level from one season to another.

* See *Torrey* 3: 21-22. Feb., 1903.

† See *Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci.* 17: 93-95, pl. 13, 14. 1906.

‡ See *Torrey* 24: 78-79, 82. 1924.

§ See *Ann. Rep. Fla. Geol. Surv.* 6: 203, 351. 1914.